

Bin strikers:

Take matters into your own hands!

If courage and determination alone could win this strike, it would've been won already. But it's not enough. ***Something needs to change.*** The commissioners and the council are planning their next move; union members need to do the same. If the commissioners get away with crushing the bin strike, they will throttle the city of Birmingham. The whole working class of Birmingham is under attack but the bin strikers are fighting alone. This is ***not good enough.*** The unions must change course before it's too late. As a first step, ordinary union members must take charge of running the bin strike. Across the city, there is plenty of support for the strikers, but it has been wasted on a photo-op dressed up as a "mega picket". Enough empty words and useless gestures! The bin strike needs solidarity ***in action.***

The current union game plan is not working, and the existing leaders who refuse to change course are not up to the job. They place great faith in ACAS, which is rigged against the working class. What did the commissioners bring to the negotiating table? They upped the ante by announcing that around 200 drivers will lose up to £8k in wages now too. The current union negotiators are no match for this. Instead of negotiating from a position of strength, they are negotiating from a position of weakness: rubbish is being collected and pickets face the threat of arrest under Section 14 of the Public Order Act if they try to stop scabbing.

The stakes are high and there are obstacles to be overcome. But strikers have been out on picket lines for ten weeks and their courageous sacrifice must not be in vain. They must ask themselves this question: do we carry on like this, and allow demoralisation to set in, giving the existing union leadership an excuse to blame the members for a sell-out deal? Or do we turn the determination of the strikers into a battle plan that can win?

This is a historic battle: we must look to the lessons of Saltley Gate. The strikers were isolated, outnumbered by police and the coking plant was working. Arthur Scargill brought hundreds of Yorkshire miners to support the strikers, but the police turned up in greater force. The

battle was won because union meetings were organised across the city at which Scargill appealed to those unions to turn solidarity into action. With the whole union movement out on strike for a day there was nothing the police could do. Saltley Gate was closed and a historic victory was won.

What to do now?

1. Don't wait for the union officials! Elect a committee of ordinary union members to run the strike.
2. Demand a union meeting to discuss the strike and hold union reps to account.
3. Ballot all unions in the city for strike action and send delegations to motivate why the bin strikers' fight is their fight.
4. Appeal to agency workers—never cross a picket line! Scabbing on the strike is against their own interests.
5. Unite, Unison: pull the plug on funding Starmer's Labour Party! Use the money to support Birmingham bin strikers!

It's late, but not *too* late. We can beat the Labour-run city council and London government that are trying to throttle this city. Bin the commissioners!

—14 May 2025, reissued 17 May